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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

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Sept. 6, 1991



SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE Edward Madigan tells reporters in Washington, D.C., that USDA officials will assess the food distribution system & the humanitarian needs of the Soviet Union & its Republics. Under Secretary **Richard Crowder** will spend ten days assessing food problems and Sec. Madigan will lead a delegation later this month. When they return, they will brief President **George Bush** on the food situation and the technical assistance needed to help the Soviet people face the upcoming long & difficult winter. (USDA Photo by **Bob Nichols**.)

CONFUSED OVER USDA FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS? USDA's Foreign Ag Service has put together a series of fact sheets, which will fill you in on U.S. overseas food donation programs, credit protection for U.S. ag exporters, ag exports, food shows, FAS agency background info & the U.S./Soviet grain trade. Want a set? **Contact: Marci Hilt** (202) 447-6445. **Media only, please.**

FALL COLOR HOTLINE -- Beginning Sept. 19, you can get an update on peak color areas in national forests throughout the U.S. by calling USDA's Forest Service Fall Color Hotline. The number is **(202) 205-1780**. Late rains in parts of the eastern & western U.S. promise exciting tree colors in those areas, says **Stanley Krugman**, director of forest management research. "Color changes are primarily brought on by increasing hours of darkness that accompany the fall season, but exact timing of peak color is also affected by cooler weather," Krugman says. **Contact: Karen Harp** (202) 205-0914.

EXPORT PROSPECTS IMPROVE -- USDA economists have raised the fiscal year 1991 forecast for ag exports \$500 million to \$37.5 billion. Improved prospects for soybeans, soybean meal & high-value products more than offset a weaker outlook for U.S. wheat & coarse grains. However, compared with fiscal 1990, exports are forecast to decline \$2.6 billion and 20 million tons, as prices weaken & the U.S. share of world trade declines. **Contact: Steve MacDonald** (202) 219-0822.



ACTING ADMINISTRATORS -- **Ronald J. Prucha** has been named acting administrator of USDA's Food Safety & Inspection Service and **Robert B. Melland** has been named acting administrator of USDA's Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service. Also, **Lonnie J. King** has been named acting associate administrator of APHIS. **Contact: Jim Greene** (202) 382-0314 (on Prucha) or **Larry Mark** (202) 447-2511 (on Melland & King).

RICE MONTH -- It's official: September is national rice month. In recognition of the importance of American-grown rice & to salute the entire U.S. rice industry, Congress has officially declared September as National Rice Month. The U.S. is one of the largest exporters of rice in the world, supplying about 20 percent of the rice for world trade. At only 82 calories per half-cup serving, rice is a great source of complex carbohydrates & it's free of fat, sodium & cholesterol. **Contact: John Hart** (713) 270-6699 or (800) 888-RICE.

ENZYME COULD MAKE SUGAR NON-FATTENING -- A natural enzyme identified by a USDA scientist can transform sugar into non-fattening food ingredients. That enzyme could offer a sweet bonus to the beet & cane sugar industries if the converted sugar can be produced cheaply enough for use as non-caloric fillers, binders & extenders for food products. **Contact: Gregory L. Cote** (309) 685-4011.

GAO REPORT -- Secretary of Agriculture **Edward Madigan**, responding to the report by the U.S. General Accounting Office on "Revitalizing the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Structure, Systems, and Strategies," said: "After six months on the job, I believe many of the criticisms of the GAO report are justified, but all are not. We will be working hard to correct the things that need to be corrected and to improve the services of the U.S. Department of Agriculture." **Contact: Roger Runnigen** (202) 447-4623.

GROWING IN THE DARK -- During 1990-91, U.S. total mushroom production increased 5 percent to 756 million pounds. The value of the mushroom crop increased 1 percent to \$671 million. This increase in value is despite lower prices for both fresh & processed mushrooms. Pennsylvania led all states with 351 pounds, a 6 percent increase over last season. Pennsylvania supplied 47 percent of the common white button mushrooms grown in the U.S. California ranked second at 131 million pounds. **Contact: Kevin Hintzman** (202) 447-5412.

CATFISH PROCESSING UP -- Farm-raised catfish processed during July totaled 32.7 million pounds, up by 11 percent from July 1990. During July, the net pounds of processed fish sold totaled 16.9 million pounds, also an increase of 11 percent from last year. The July average prices for whole fish were \$1.50 per pound (ice pack) & \$1.64 (frozen) **Contact: Ron Sitzman** (202) 447-3244.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1787 -- Eating hamburgers is an American tradition. On this edition of **Agriculture USA**, **Gary Crawford** reports on a development that could change the way the public views the hamburger nutritionally. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1269 -- Eating breakfast; early nutrition training; nutrition screening for seniors; buying a water treatment system; grain threshing. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1777 -- USDA News Highlights; U.S. assesses Soviet food needs; 1991 world cigarette production; fall fertilizer application concerns; recycling USDA food packages. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #14 -- Hanging on to copper; vitamin B6 & behavior; mega-dosing B6; computerized noshing; true grits? ... more accurate nutrition reporting. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Tues., Sept. 17, tobacco outlook, crop/weather update; Wed., Sept. 18, sugar/sweeteners outlook, cattle on feed; Thurs., Sept. 19, fruit/nut outlook, catfish production; Fri., Sept. 20, U.S. ag outlook, ag trade update; Mon., Sept. 23, ag resources; livestock/poultry update; Tues., Sept. 24, crop/weather update, poultry production; Wed., Sept. 25, aquaculture outlook, citrus fruit production; Thurs., Sept. 26, world tobacco situation.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

FEATURES -- **Lynn Wyvill** reports on USDA's Packers & Stockyards Admin.; **Brian Norris** takes a look at rural health information; **DeBoria Janifer** reports on Forest Service partnerships.

ACTUALITIES -- Sec. Madigan on food assistance for the USSR; USDA meteorologist **Norton Strommen** on weather & crops; USDA economist **Nathan Childs** on ag outlook.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- **DeBoria Janifer** reports on exercise & the elderly; **Pat O'Leary** reports on top ten farm exporter states.

Available on Satellite Westar 4, Transponder 12D (Channel 23), audio 6.2 or 6.8: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:45 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:45 a.m., EDT.

OFFMIKE

GOOD HARVEST...of row crops is underway in many central sections of Minnesota thanks to adequate rainfall, says **Terry Hamil** (KASM, Albany). Dairy prices are up, which will provide some relief to producers, but not enough to help everyone. Terry says his station is covering a wetlands bill in the state legislature. The bill redefines what is considered a wetland. He says farmers are following developments closely.

HOT TEMPERATURES...helped corn and soybean development, says **Al Carstens** (KATE, ALbert Lea, Minn.), but many southern areas suffered from dryness prompting an early cutting. Concern now is getting existing crops in before the first freeze.

A MONTH AGO...corn and soybeans were looking great in southern Wisconsin, says **Bob Middendorf** (Central Ag News Network, Dickeyville), but lack of moisture has reduced prospects. Bob will be covering the World Dairy Expo in Madison, Oct. 1-6.

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BEST COTTON CROP...in years is how it was described by **Bill McReynolds** (WOAI, San Antonio, Tex.). Recent rains helped development. Bill says aphids hit cotton in the Rio Grande Valley & have moved into peanuts & vegetable crops.

TRAVELING...to an NAFB meeting outside one's own region can broaden your understanding of agriculture, says **Max Molleston** (WKBF, Rock Island, Ill.). Max, in the northeast region, attended the western meeting in Vail, Colo., this summer. Max says he learned more about growing conditions & production in the west.

CONGRATULATIONS...to **Ray Wilkinson** (WRAL-TV/Tobacco Radio Network, Raleigh, N.C.). He was presented the Agricultural Communicator of the Year award at NAMA's St. Louis meeting. Oct. 18-27 Ray and crew at channel 5 will serve as anchor station for coverage of the grand champion steer auction at the North Carolina State Fair. Fair's theme this year is "Get a Little Agri-Culture."

VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio & TV Division